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Henniger et al.

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(54) **WEIGHT PLATE**

(71) Applicant: **Coulter Ventures, LLC.**, Columbus, OH (US)

(72) Inventors: **William Henniger**, Columbus, OH (US); **Anahita Ameri**, Columbus, OH (US); **Dylan Jones**, Santa Barbara, CA (US)

(73) Assignee: **Coulter Ventures, LLC.**, Columbus, OH (US)

(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

This patent is subject to a terminal disclaimer.

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A63B 21/06 (2006.01)
A63B 21/072 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC ***A63B 21/0604*** (2013.01); *A63B 21/0724* (2013.01); *A63B 21/0726* (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC A63B 21/0604; A63B 21/0724; A63B 21/0726; A63B 2071/0063;
(Continued)

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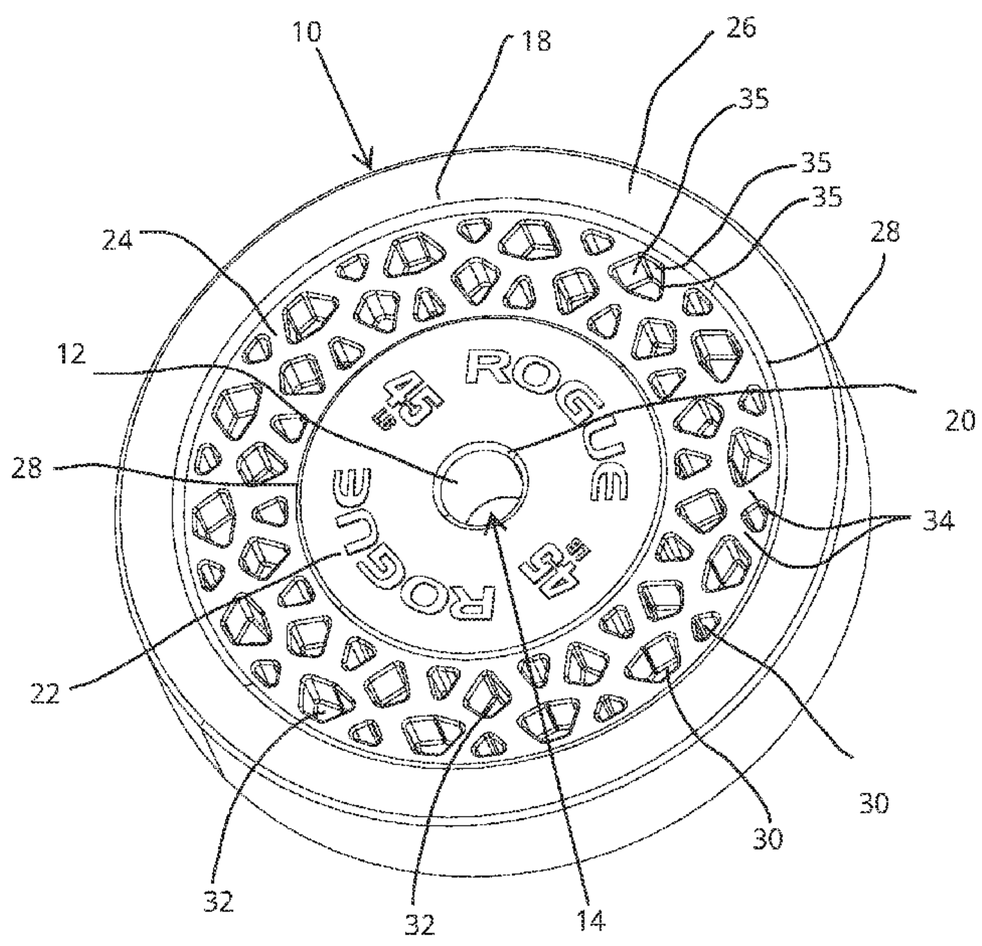
Primary Examiner — Joshua Lee
Assistant Examiner — Catrina A Letterman
(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Banner & Witcoff, Ltd.

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A weight plate includes a first section having an annular shape with a passage extending axially through the first section and configured to receive an elongated member therethrough, and a second section having an annular shape and positioned radially outward of the first section, where the second section includes first and second outer surfaces on opposite axial sides of the weight plate with an axial thickness defined between the first and second outer surfaces. The second section has a plurality of recesses each extending axially inward from the first and second outer surfaces at least partially through the axial thickness of the second section.

19 Claims, 10 Drawing Sheets



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(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC A63B 2209/00; A63B 21/0607; A63B 21/4035; A63B 21/0004; A63B 21/06; A63B 21/072–0728; A63B 21/0601–0606; A63B 21/00058–00065; B29D 30/02; B60C 7/102; B60C 7/12; B60C 17/06; B60C 7/18; B60C 17/061; B60C 2001/0091; B60C 7/00; B60C 7/107; B60C 7/22
See application file for complete search history.

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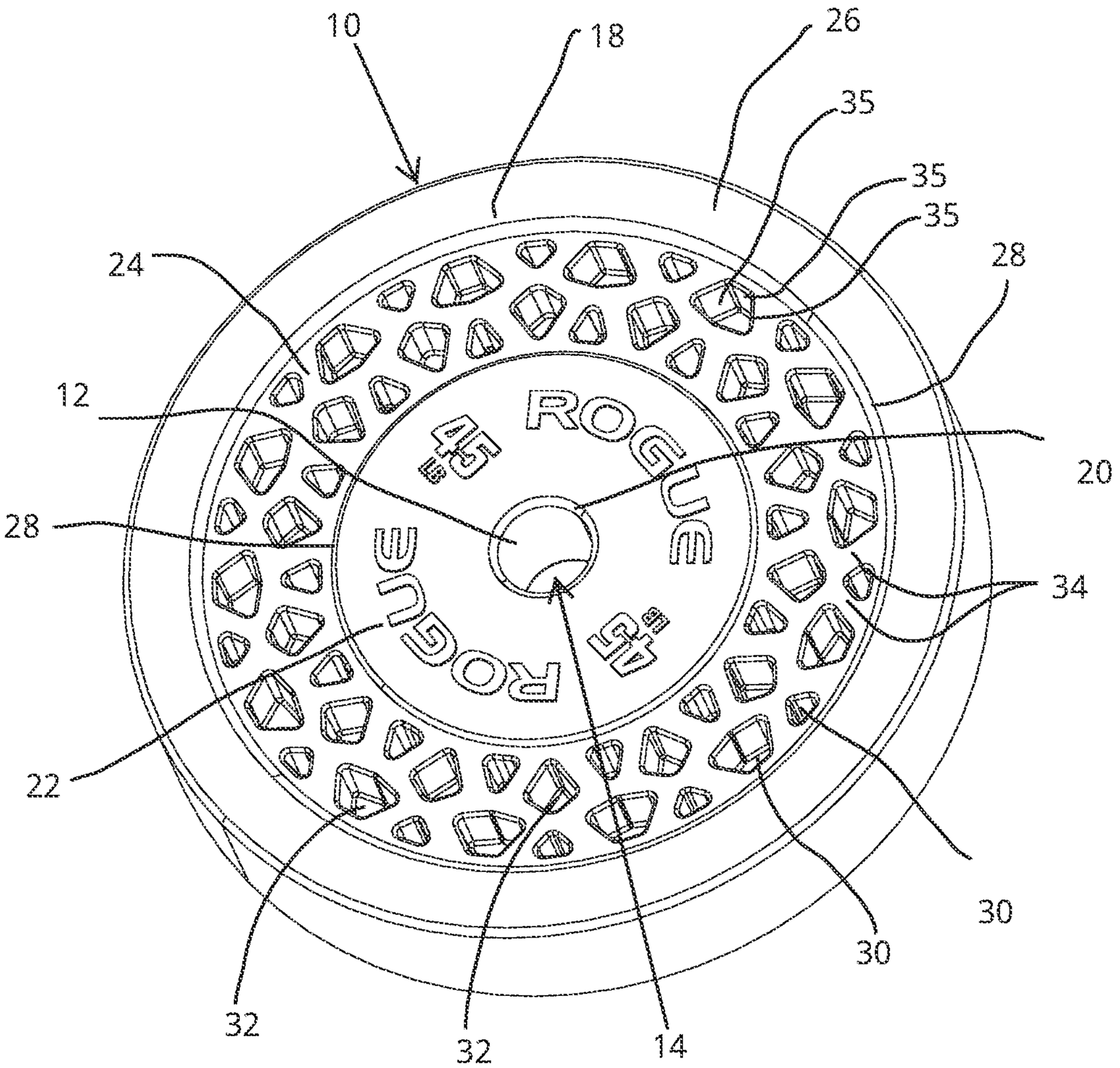

FIG. 1

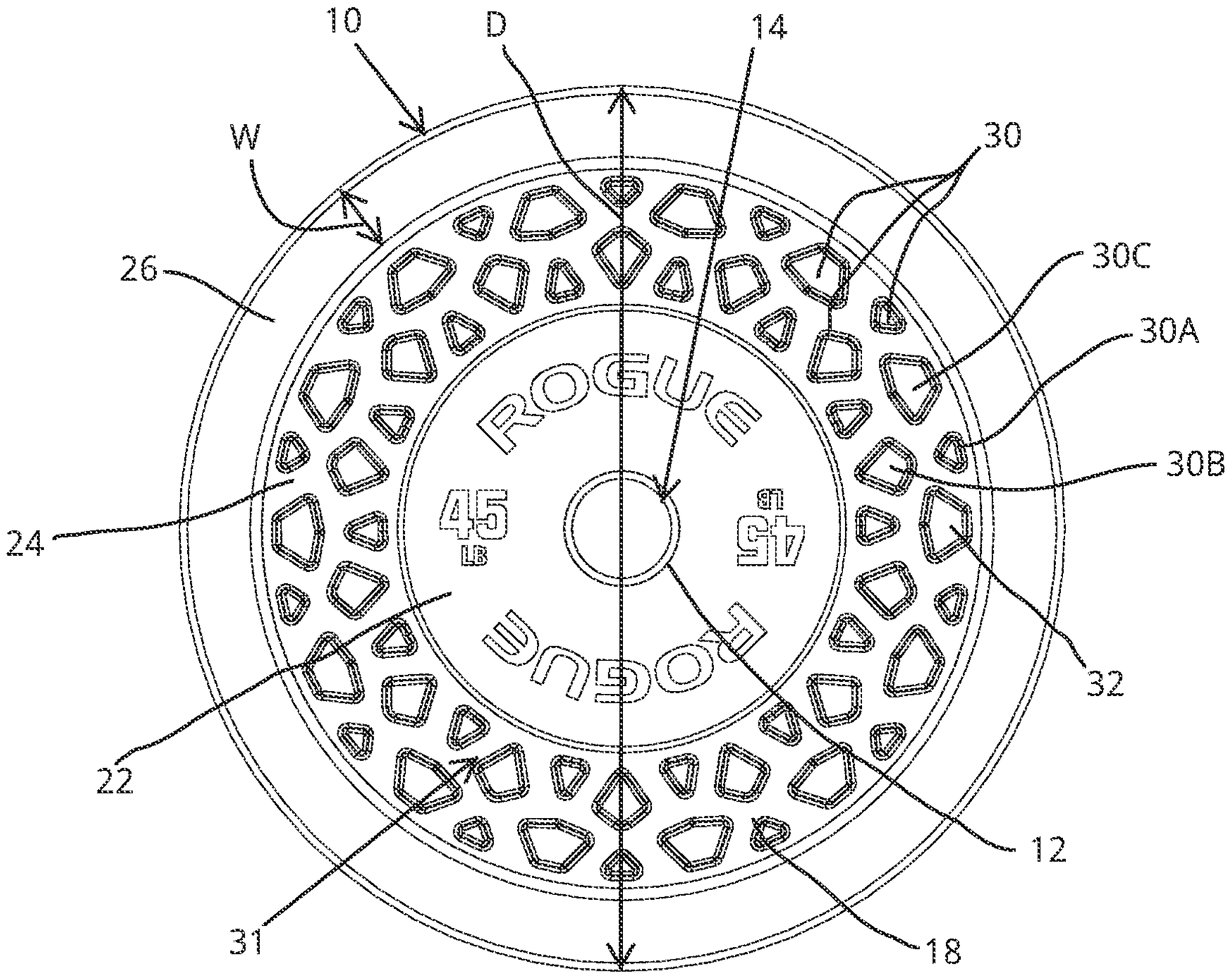

FIG. 2

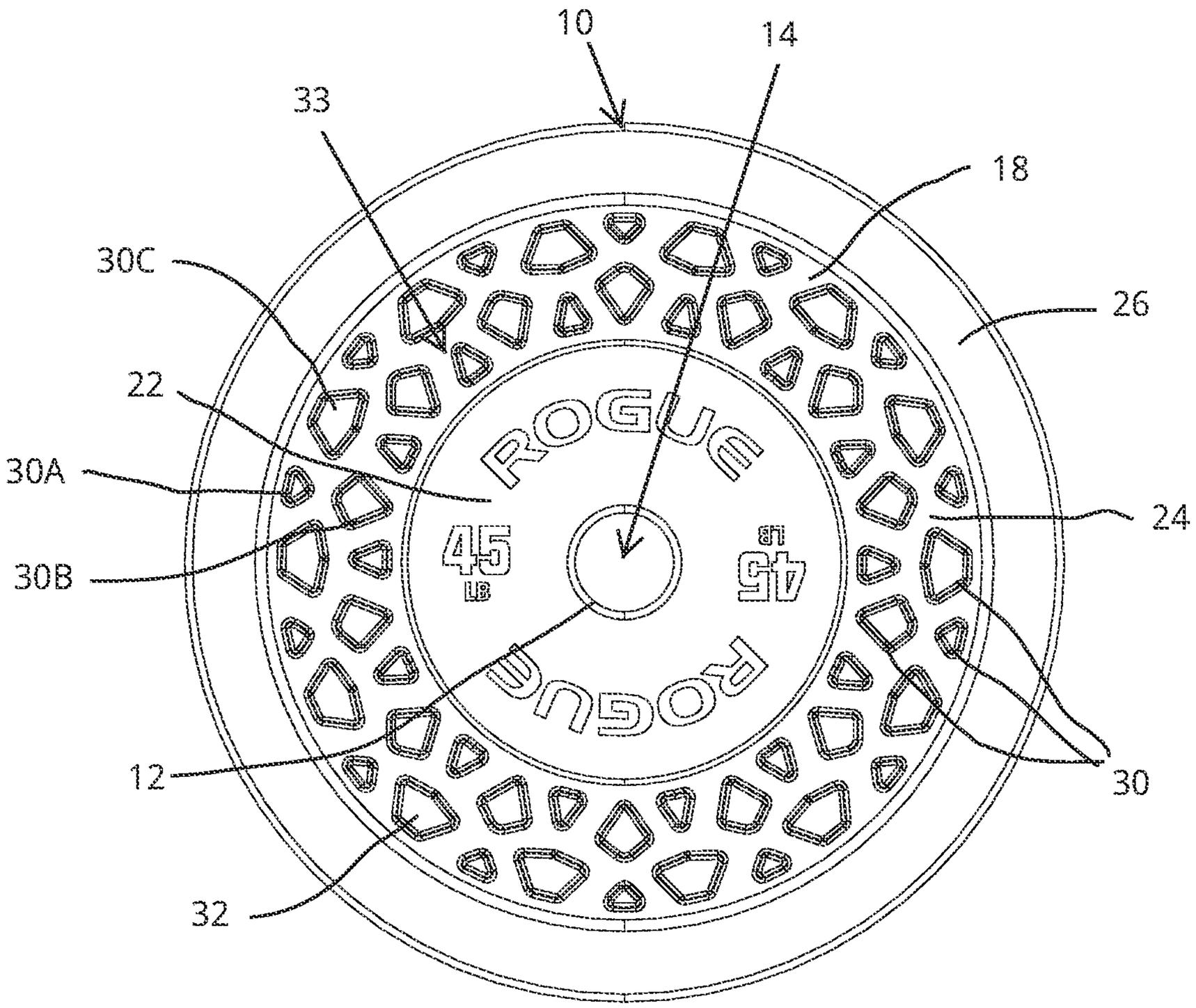

FIG. 3

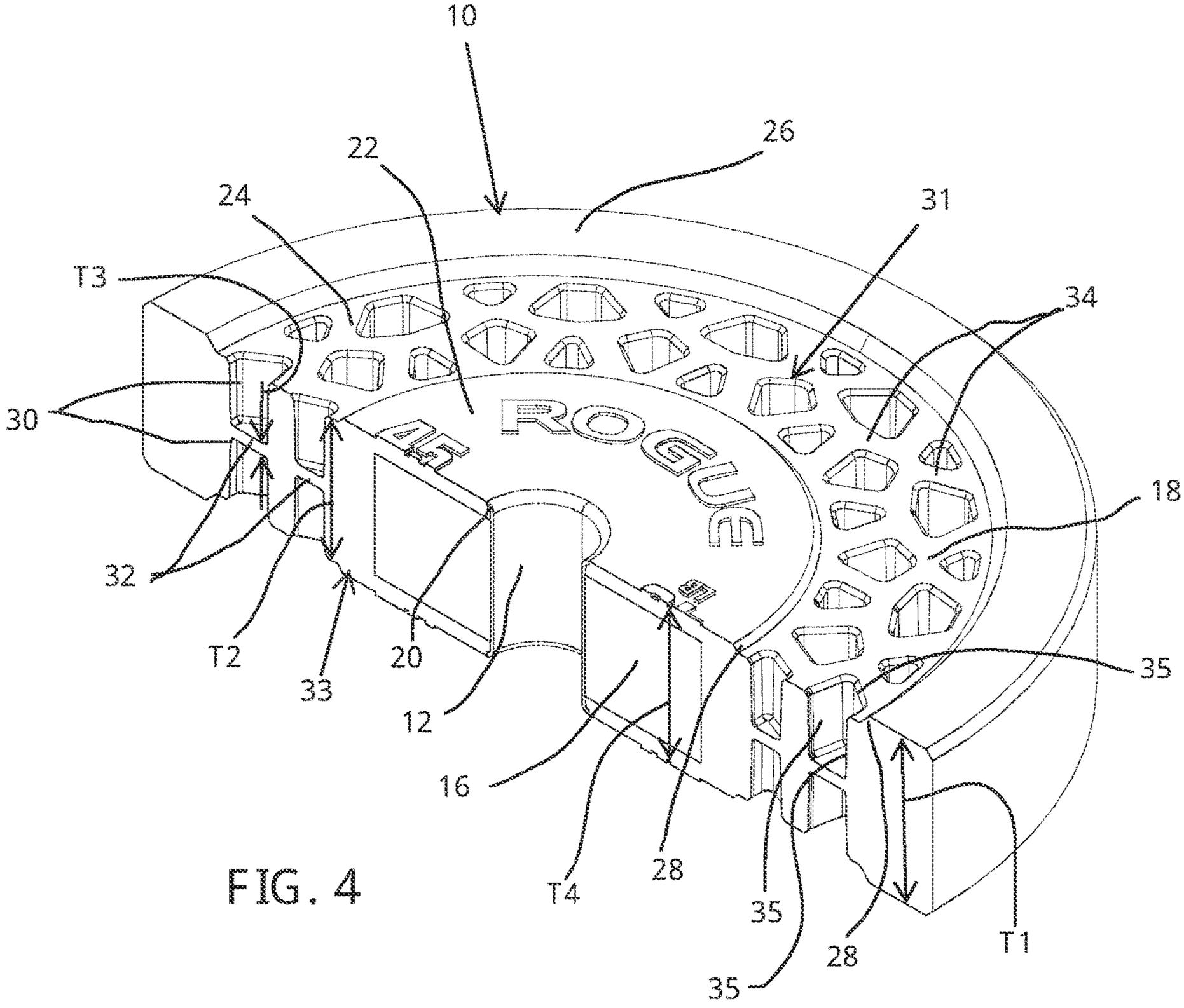

FIG. 4

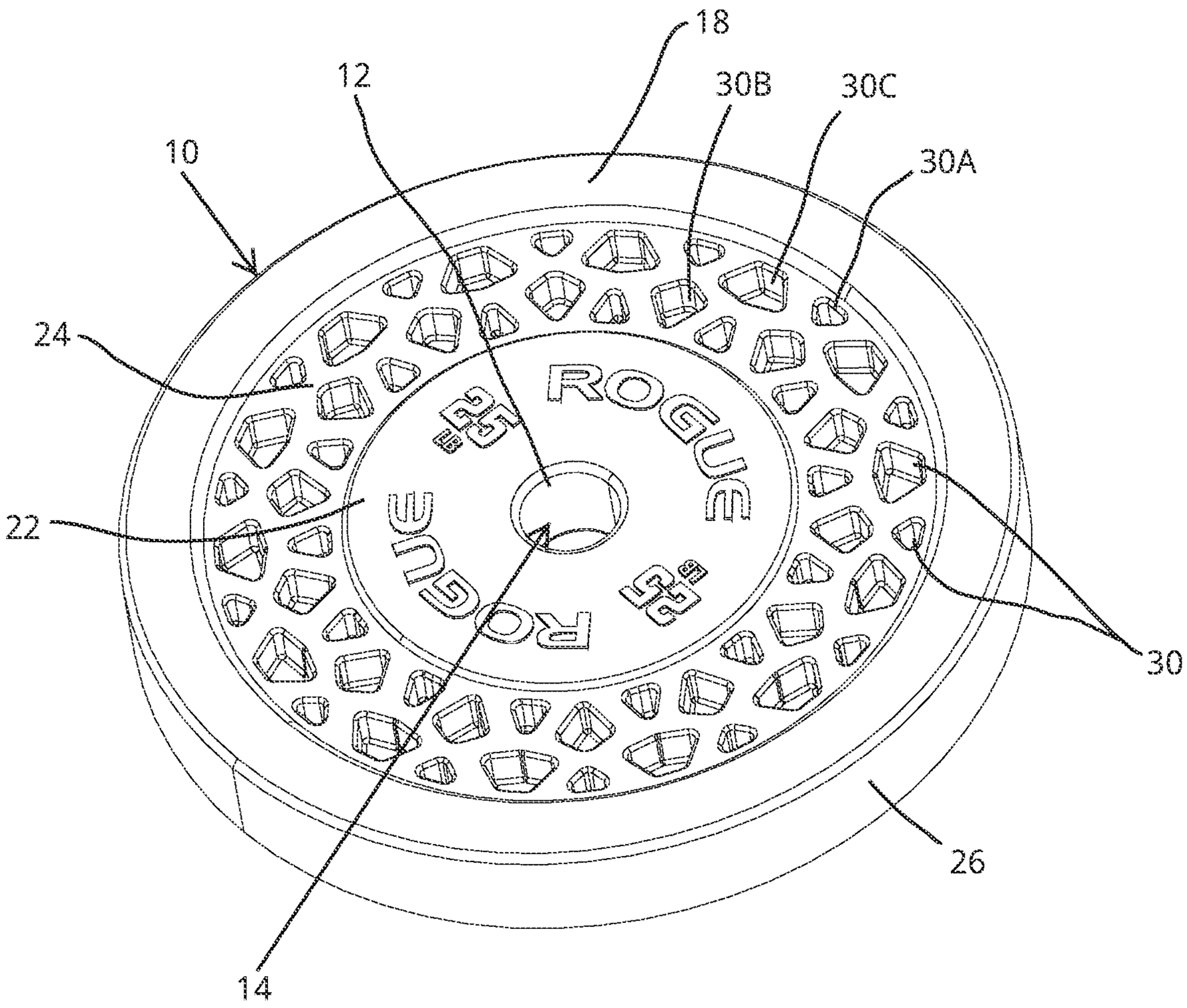

FIG. 5

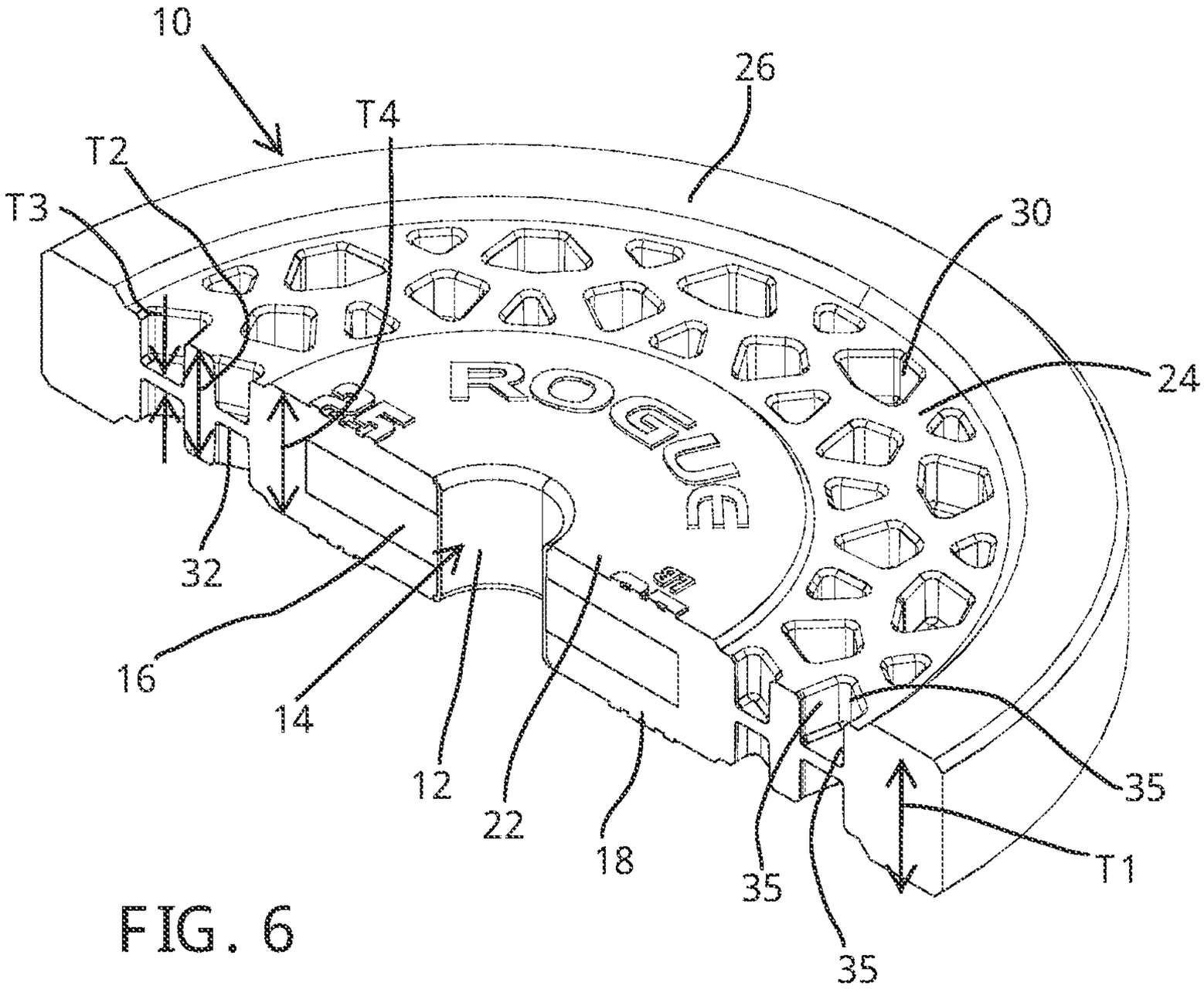

FIG. 6

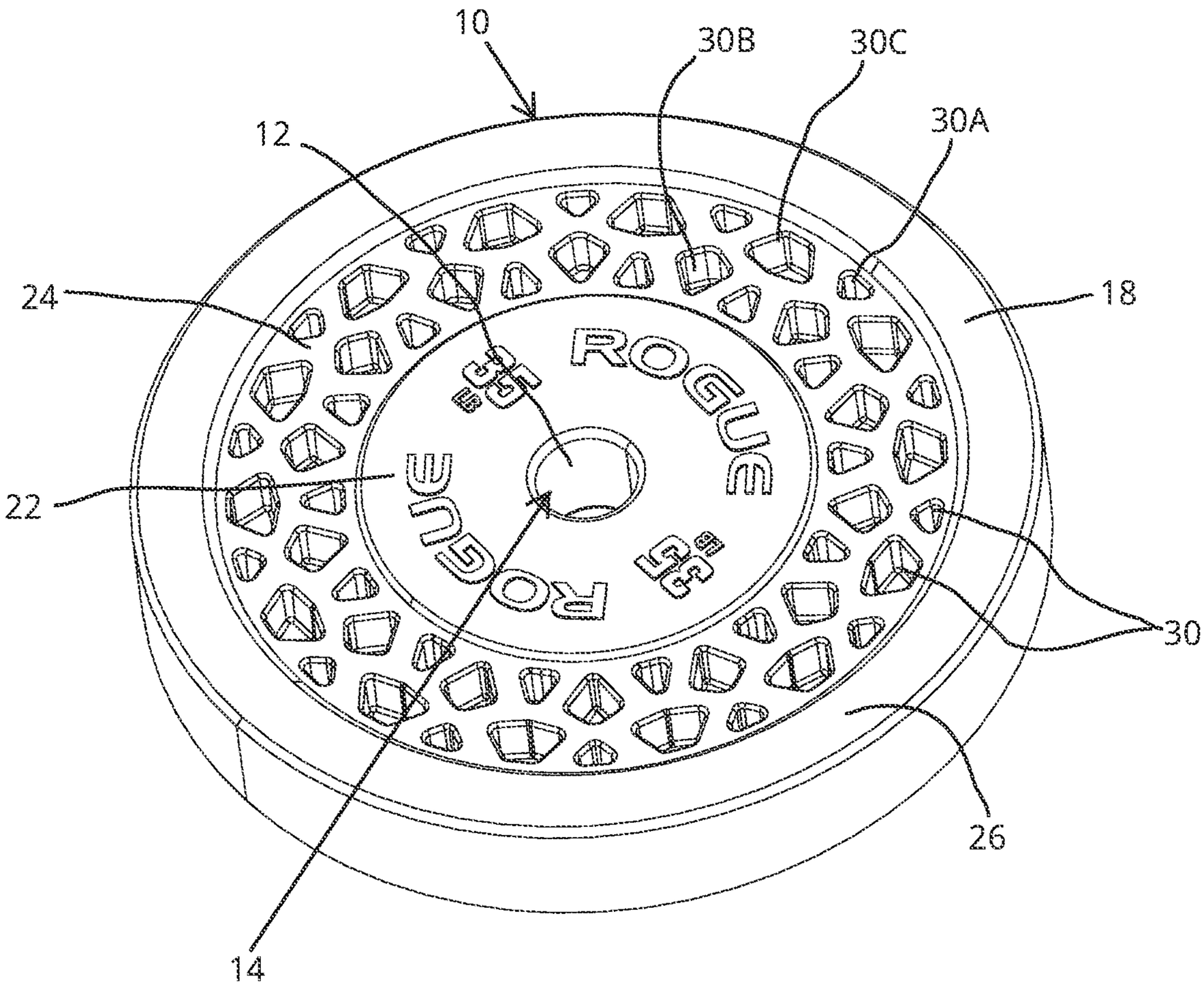

FIG. 7

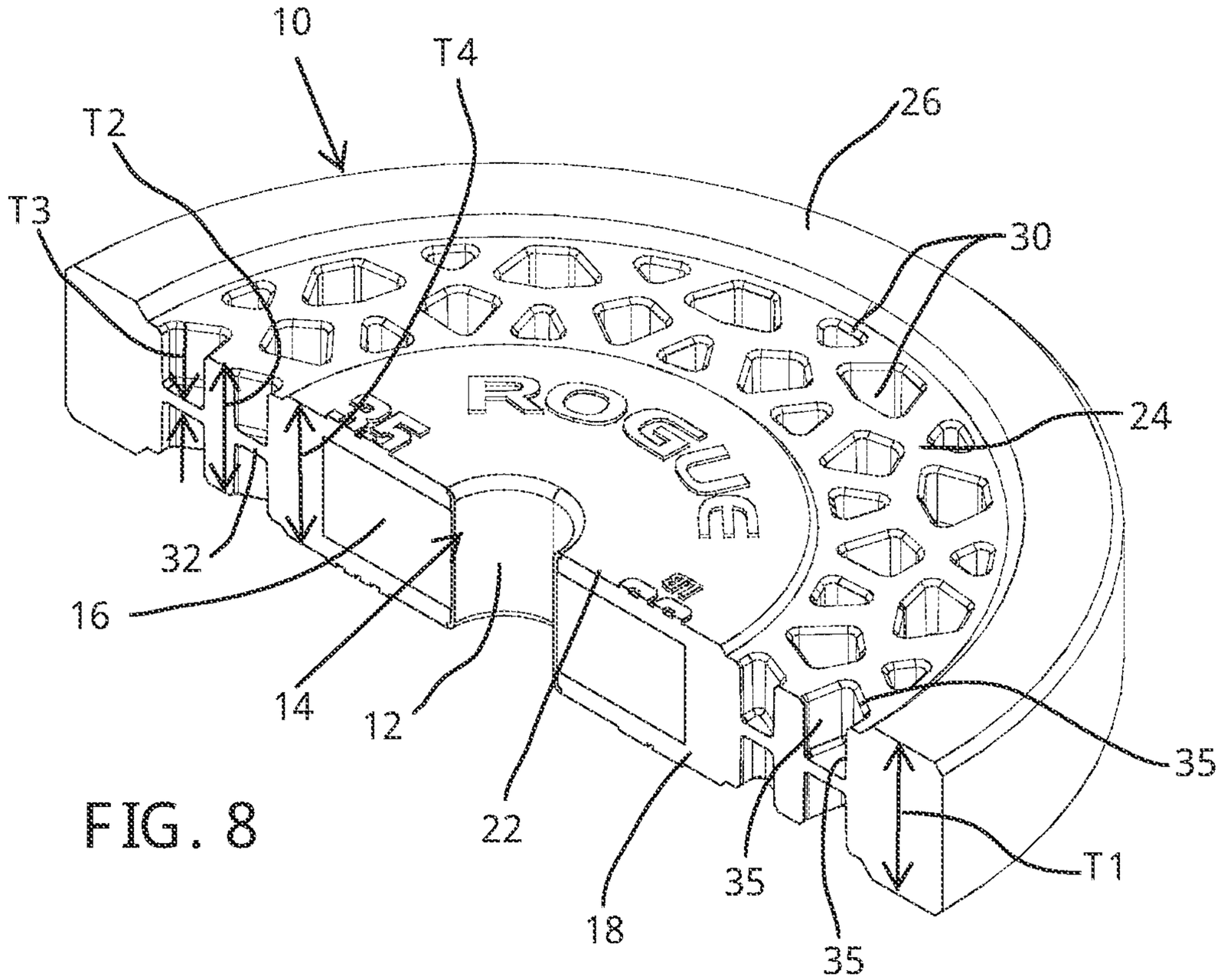

FIG. 8

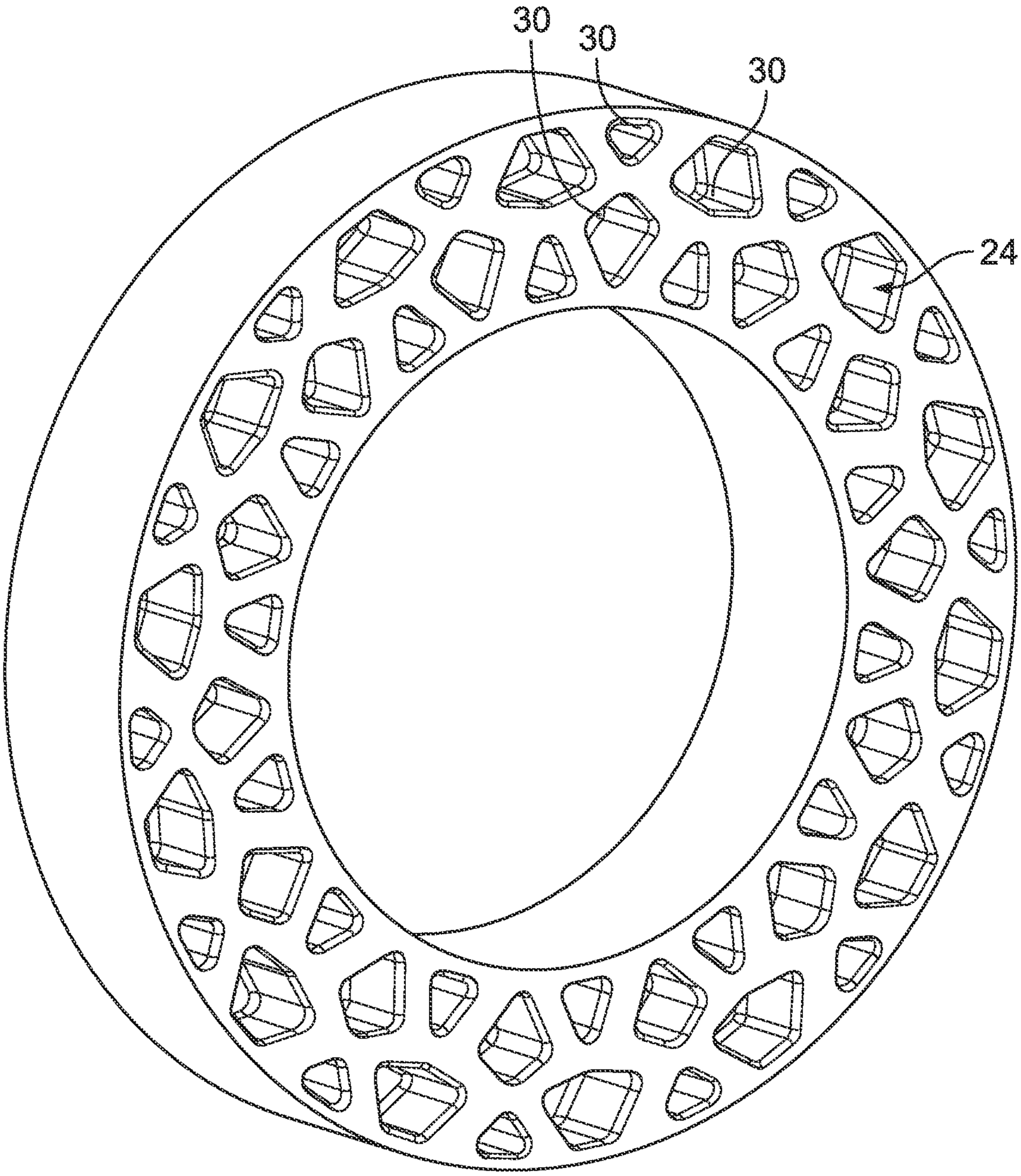

FIG. 9

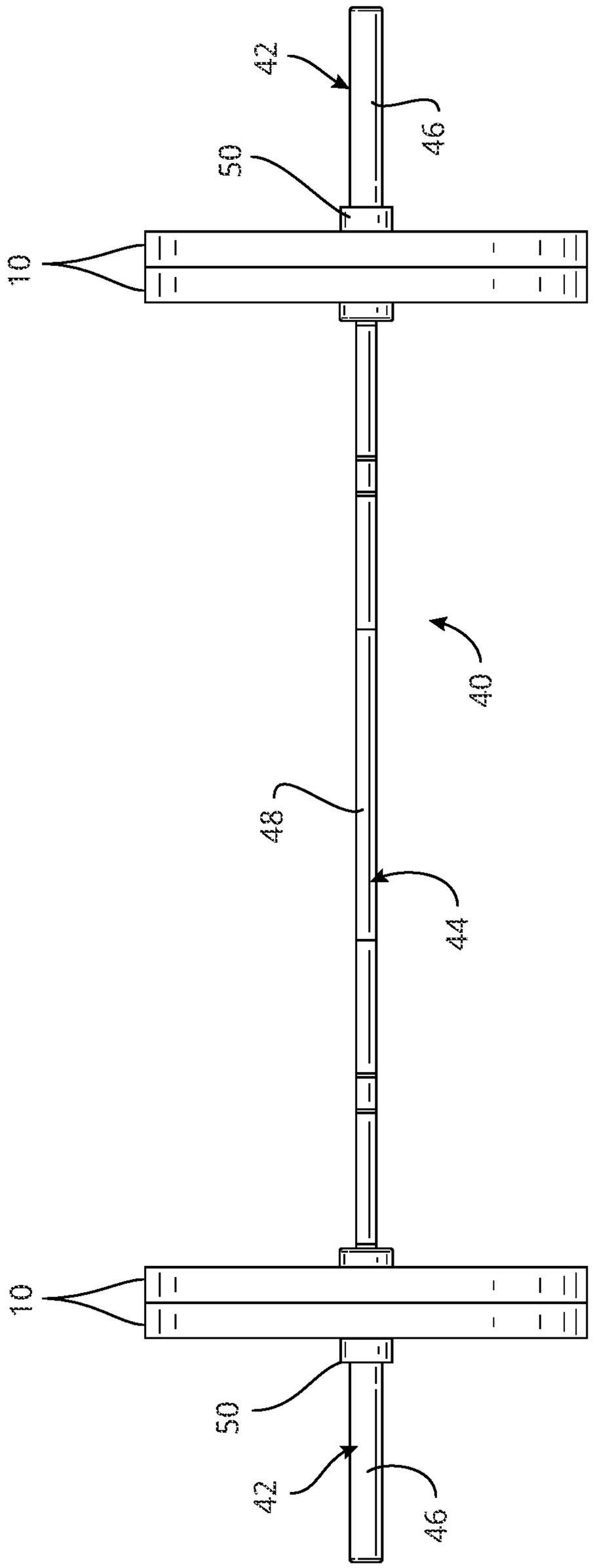

FIG. 10

WEIGHT PLATE

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 17/089,338, filed Nov. 4, 2020, which claims priority to U.S. Provisional Application No. 62/930,423, filed Nov. 4, 2019, which prior applications (including the Appendix filed with Application No. 62/930,423) are incorporated by reference herein in their entireties.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This disclosure relates to weight plates for use in weightlifting exercises, and more specifically to weight plates with features for reducing noise and/or vibration when the weight plate is dropped from an elevated position.

BACKGROUND

Weightlifting exercises are performed in a large variety of different settings, including large gyms, small gyms, homes, among many other locations. Such settings may be located in an area where loud noise is a potential issue, such as within a home or residential area or close to another business. Weight plates are one of the most frequently used types of weightlifting equipment. In some exercises, barbells weighted with weight plates are dropped from a height to the ground, such as from waist height, shoulder height, head height, etc., and such dropping can create significant noise. There is a need for providing a weight plate that reduces the noise emitted when dropping the weight plates from a height, while also retaining plate durability and safety.

The present disclosure is provided to address this need and other needs in existing weight plates. A full discussion of the features and advantages of the present invention is deferred to the following detailed description, which proceeds with reference to the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF SUMMARY

Aspects of the disclosure relate to a weight plate that includes an outer body formed of a first material and an inner body formed of a second material having a larger density and lower flexibility than the first material. The outer body includes an inner section having an annular shape with a passage extending axially through the inner section and configured to receive an elongated member therethrough, the inner section having a first axial thickness, a middle section having an annular shape and positioned radially outward of the inner section, the middle section including first and second outer surfaces on opposite axial sides of the outer body, with a second axial thickness defined between the first and second outer surfaces, and an outer section having an annular shape and positioned radially outward of the middle section and forming an outer radial periphery of the weight plate, where the outer section has a third axial thickness. The first axial thickness and the third axial thickness are greater than the second axial thickness. The inner body is contained within the inner section of the outer body. The middle section has a plurality of recesses extending axially inward from the first and second outer surfaces through a portion of the second axial thickness, and the plurality of recesses include a plurality of first-shaped recesses having a first peripheral shape with a first number of sides and a plurality of second-shaped recesses having a second peripheral shape that is different than the first peripheral shape and with a second number of sides that is different from the first number of sides. Each of the first-shaped recesses on the first outer surface is axially aligned with another of the first-shaped recesses on the second outer surface to form a pair of first-shaped recesses separated by a first inner wall, and each of the second-shaped recesses on the first outer surface is axially aligned with another of the second-shaped recesses on the second outer surface to form a pair of second-shaped recesses separated by a second inner wall.

According to one aspect, the outer body surrounds the inner body on at least both axial sides and an outer radial side thereof.

According to another aspect, the inner body is formed of a single piece, and the outer body is molded around the inner body as a single piece.

According to a further aspect, the plurality of recesses further include a plurality of third-shaped recesses having a third peripheral shape that is different from the first peripheral shape and the second peripheral shape and a third number of sides that is different from the first number of sides and the second number of sides.

According to yet another aspect, the first-shaped recesses each have a first perimeter defined at the first or second outer surface and a first volume, and the second-shaped recesses each have a second perimeter defined at the first or second outer surface that is different from the first perimeter and a second volume that is different from the first volume.

Additional aspects of the disclosure relate to a weight plate that includes a first section having an annular shape with a passage extending axially through the first section and configured to receive an elongated member therethrough, and a second section having an annular shape and positioned radially outward of the first section, where the second section includes first and second outer surfaces on opposite axial sides of the weight plate with an axial thickness defined between the first and second outer surfaces. The second section has a plurality of first recesses each extending axially inward from the first outer surface partially through the axial thickness of the second section to a first end recessed from the first outer surface, and a plurality of second recesses each extending axially inward from the second outer surface partially through the axial thickness of the second section to a second end recessed from the second outer surface. Each of the first recesses is axially aligned with one of the second recesses to form an aligned pair of recesses, such that an inner wall separates the first and second recesses of each aligned pair of recesses and defines the first and second ends of the first and second recesses of each aligned pair of recesses.

According to one aspect, the first and second recesses of each aligned pair of recesses have identical sizes and shapes. In one configuration, the plurality of first recesses and the plurality of second recesses each include a plurality of first-shaped recesses having a first shape and a plurality of second-shaped recesses having a second shape that is different from the first shape, where each first-shaped recess of the plurality of first recesses is axially aligned with one of the first-shaped recesses of the plurality of second recesses, and each second-shaped recess of the plurality of first recesses is axially aligned with one of the second-shaped recesses of the plurality of second recesses. In a further configuration, the plurality of first recesses and the plurality of second recesses each further include a plurality of third-shaped recesses having a third shape that is different from the first shape and the second shape, and wherein each

third-shaped recess of the plurality of first recesses is axially aligned with one of the third-shaped recesses of the plurality of second recesses.

According to another aspect, each of the first recesses and each of the second recesses extend through less than half of the axial thickness of the second section.

According to a further aspect, the weight plate further includes a third section having an annular shape and positioned radially outward of the second section and forming an outer radial periphery of the weight plate. In one configuration, the third section has a greater axial thickness than the second section.

According to a still further aspect, the weight plate further includes an inner body having a larger density than a material forming the first and second outer surfaces, wherein the inner body is contained within the inner section.

According to yet another aspect, the second section is positioned immediately radially outward of the first section and is adjacent to the first section.

Further aspects of the disclosure relate to a weight plate including a first section having an annular shape with a passage extending axially through the first section and configured to receive an elongated member therethrough, and a second section having an annular shape and positioned radially outward of the first section, where the second section includes first and second outer surfaces on opposite axial sides of the weight plate with an axial thickness defined between the first and second outer surfaces. The second section has a plurality of recesses extending axially inward from at least one of the first and second outer surfaces through at least a portion of the second axial thickness, and the plurality of recesses comprise a plurality of first-shaped recesses having a first peripheral shape with a first number of sides and a plurality of second-shaped recesses having a second peripheral shape that is different than the first peripheral shape and with a second number of sides that is different from the first number of sides.

According to one aspect, the first peripheral shape is a first polygonal shape, and the second peripheral shape is a second polygonal shape, and the first and second polygonal shapes each comprise a plurality of flat, planar sides that extend axially inward and are joined by a plurality of corners defined therebetween.

According to another aspect, the plurality of recesses further includes a plurality of third-shaped recesses having a third peripheral shape that is different from the first peripheral shape and the second peripheral shape and a third number of sides that is different from the first number of sides and the second number of sides.

According to a further aspect, the first-shaped recesses extend axially inward from both of the first and second outer surfaces, and the second-shaped recesses extend axially inward from both of the first and second outer surfaces. In one configuration, each of the first-shaped recesses on the first outer surface is axially aligned with another of the first-shaped recesses on the second outer surface to form a pair of first-shaped recesses separated by a first inner wall, and each of the second-shaped recesses on the first outer surface is axially aligned with another of the second-shaped recesses on the second outer surface to form a pair of second-shaped recesses separated by a second inner wall.

According to yet another aspect, the first-shaped recesses each have a first volume and the second-shaped recesses each have a second volume that is different from the first volume.

According to a still further aspect, the first-shaped recesses each have a first perimeter defined at the first or second outer surface, and the second-shaped recesses each have a second perimeter defined at the first or second outer surface that is different from the first perimeter.

Still further aspects of the disclosure relate to a weight plate including an outer body formed of a first material and an inner body formed of a second material having a larger density and lower flexibility than the first material. The outer body includes a first section having an annular shape with a passage extending axially through the first section and configured to receive an elongated member therethrough, and a second section having an annular shape and positioned radially outward of the first section, where the second section includes first and second outer surfaces on opposite axial sides of the outer body, with an axial thickness defined between the first and second outer surfaces, and a plurality of recesses extending axially inward from at least one of the first and second outer surfaces through at least a portion of the axial thickness. The inner body is contained within the first section of the outer body, such that the outer body surrounds the inner body on at least both axial sides and an outer radial side thereof. The weight plate further includes a hub surrounding the passage, where the hub is engaged with an inner radial side of the inner body.

According to one aspect, the first material is or contains one or more polymer materials, and the second material is or contains one or more metallic materials.

According to another aspect, the inner body is formed of a single piece, and the outer body is molded around the inner body as a single piece.

According to a further aspect, the hub is integrally formed as part of the inner body and is formed of the second material.

According to yet another aspect, the ratio of a mass of the inner body to a mass of the outer body may vary by the weight of the weight plate. As one example, the weight plate may have a weight of 25 pounds, and this ratio is from 0.42 to 0.78. As another example, the weight plate may have a weight of 35 pounds, and this ratio is from 0.84 to 1.56. As a further example, the weight plate may have a weight of 45 pounds, and this ratio is from 0.77 to 1.43.

Yet additional aspects of the disclosure relate to a weight plate that includes a first section having an annular shape with a passage extending axially through the first section and configured to receive an elongated member therethrough, and a second section having an annular shape with a circular inner periphery and a circular outer periphery and positioned radially outward of the first section, where the second section includes first and second outer surfaces on opposite axial sides of the weight plate with an axial thickness defined between the first and second outer surfaces. The second section has a plurality of recesses extending axially inward from the first and second outer surfaces at least partially through the axial thickness of the second section. The axial thickness of portions of the second section surrounding the recesses is constant between the inner periphery and the outer periphery. A total volume occupied by the plurality of recesses between the first and second outer surfaces is from 20% to 30% of a total volume of solid material in the second section between the inner periphery and the outer periphery. In another configuration, the total volume occupied by the plurality of recesses between the first and second outer surfaces is from 22-28% of the total volume of solid material in the second section between the inner periphery and the outer periphery. In a further configuration, the total volume occupied by the plurality of recesses between the first and second outer surfaces is about 25% of the total volume of

solid material in the second section between the inner periphery and the outer periphery.

According to one aspect, the plurality of recesses includes a plurality of first recesses each extending axially inward from the first outer surface partially through the axial thickness of the second section to a first end recessed from the first outer surface, and a plurality of second recesses each extending axially inward from the second outer surface partially through the axial thickness of the second section to a second end recessed from the second outer surface. In one configuration, each of the first recesses is axially aligned with one of the second recesses to form an aligned pair of recesses, such that an inner wall separates the first and second recesses of each aligned pair of recesses and defines the first and second ends of the first and second recesses of each aligned pair of recesses. In another configuration, the first and second recesses of each aligned pair of recesses may have identical sizes and shapes.

According to another aspect, the weight plate further includes a third section having an annular shape and positioned radially outward of the second section and forming an outer radial periphery of the weight plate, where the third section has a greater axial thickness than the second section. In one configuration, the second section is positioned immediately radially outward of the first section and is adjacent to the first section, and the third section is positioned immediately radially outward of the second section and is adjacent to the second section, such that the third section extends from the second section to the outer radial periphery of the weight plate.

According to a further aspect, each of the plurality of recesses has a constant shape along an entire axial length of the respective recess.

Further aspects of the disclosure relate to a weight plate including a weight plate body having an outer periphery, a first outer surface and a second outer surface on opposite axial sides of the weight plate body, and a passage extending axially through the weight plate body and configured to receive an elongated member therethrough, where the first surface and the second surface extend from the passage radially outward to the outer periphery, and a plurality of recesses extending axially inward from the first and second outer surfaces at least partially through the axial thickness of the second section. A total volume occupied by the plurality of recesses between the first and second outer surfaces is from 6% to 13% of a total volume of solid material in the weight plate between the passage and the outer periphery.

According to one aspect, the weight plate body has an axial thickness defined between the first outer surface and the second outer surface, and the plurality of recesses includes a plurality of first recesses each extending axially inward from the first outer surface partially through the axial thickness of the weight plate body to a first end recessed from the first outer surface, and a plurality of second recesses each extending axially inward from the second outer surface partially through the axial thickness of the weight plate body to a second end recessed from the second outer surface. In one configuration, each of the first recesses is axially aligned with one of the second recesses to form an aligned pair of recesses, such that an inner wall separates the first and second recesses of each aligned pair of recesses and defines the first and second ends of the first and second recesses of each aligned pair of recesses. In another configuration, the first and second recesses of each aligned pair of recesses have identical sizes and shapes.

According to another aspect, the weight plate body includes a first section having an annular shape with the passage extending axially through the first section, a second section having an annular shape and positioned radially outward of the first section, and a third section having an annular shape and positioned radially outward of the second section and forming an outer radial periphery of the weight plate. In one configuration, the third section has a greater axial thickness than the second section, and the plurality of recesses are formed in the second section.

According to a further aspect, each of the plurality of recesses has a constant shape along an entire axial length of the respective recess.

Other aspects of the disclosure relate to a weightlifting apparatus including a weight mount connected to a gripping member, such as a barbell or dumbbell, with one or more weight plates as described herein mounted on the weight mount.

Still other aspects of the disclosure relate to a method of manufacturing a weight plate as described herein, including providing an inner body made at least partially from a first material and molding an outer body in connection with, and optionally at least partially surrounding, the inner body. The outer body may be made from a second material that is more flexible and less dense than the first material of the inner body.

Other features and advantages of the disclosure will be apparent from the following description taken in conjunction with the attached drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

To allow for a more full understanding of the present disclosure, it will now be described by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

FIG. **1** is a perspective view of one embodiment of a weight plate according to aspects of the disclosure;

FIG. **2** is a front view of the weight plate of FIG. **1**;

FIG. **3** is a rear view of the weight plate of FIG. **1**;

FIG. **4** is a cross-section view of the weight plate of FIG. **1**;

FIG. **5** is a perspective view of another embodiment of a weight plate according to aspects of the disclosure;

FIG. **6** is a cross-section view of the weight plate of FIG. **5**;

FIG. **7** is a perspective view of another embodiment of a weight plate according to aspects of the disclosure;

FIG. **8** is a cross-section view of the weight plate of FIG. **7**;

FIG. **9** is a perspective view of a section of the weight plate of FIGS. **1-4**; and

FIG. **10** is a plan view of one embodiment of a weightlifting apparatus in the form of a barbell having weight plates as shown in FIGS. **1-4** engaged with the barbell.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

While this invention is susceptible of embodiments in many different forms, there are shown in the drawings and will herein be described in detail example embodiments of the invention with the understanding that the present disclosure is to be considered as an exemplification of the principles of the invention and is not intended to limit the broad aspect of the invention to the embodiments illustrated. In the following description of various example structures according to the invention, reference is made to the accompanying drawings, which form a part hereof, and in which are shown by way of illustration various example devices, systems, and environments in which aspects of the invention

may be practiced. It is to be understood that other specific arrangements of parts, example devices, systems, and environments may be utilized and structural and functional modifications may be made without departing from the scope of the present invention.

FIGS. **1-4** illustrate an example embodiment of a weight plate **10** according to aspects of the present disclosure, which includes a hub **12** defining a passage **14**, an inner body **16**, and an outer body **18** extending radially and/or axially outward of the inner body **16**. The hub **12** and the passage **14** are configured for mounting the weight plate **10** as known in the art, such as by receiving a portion of a barbell or other weight mount therein for use in a weightlifting exercise. FIG. **10** illustrates a weightlifting apparatus **40** in the form of a barbell, which includes two weight mounts **42** in the form of barbell sleeves **46** connected to opposite ends of a gripping member **44** in the form of a bar **48**, with two weight plates **10** as shown in FIGS. **1-4** removably mounted on each of the barbell sleeves **46**. Each of the barbell sleeves **46** is inserted through the passage **14** of the weight plate **10** in this configuration. Additionally, barbell collars **50** are engaged with each of the barbell sleeves **46** to hold the weight plates **10** in place.

The hub **12** may have flanged and/or beveled ends **20** in order to ease insertion of a barbell or other weight mount. The inner body **16** is positioned radially outward of the hub **12**, and the inner radial side of the inner body **16** may be engaged with or connected to the hub **12** in one embodiment. The hub **12** is formed as a separate piece from the inner body **16** in FIGS. **1-4**, but may be integrally formed as part of the inner body **16** in another embodiment. It is understood that the hub **12** and the inner body **16** may be formed of the same material in this configuration. The hub **12** may be designed for durability and low friction properties. In one embodiment, the hub **12** may be formed of stainless steel.

The inner body **16** is formed of a metal, e.g., cast iron or steel in one embodiment, and is configured to provide mass to the weight plate **10**. The inner body **16** may be formed of a different material or materials in other embodiments, and it is understood that the material(s) forming the inner body **16** may have a greater density than the material forming the outer body **18**. The inner body **16** is completely encased by the hub **12** and the outer body **18** in the embodiment of FIGS. **1-4**, and the outer body **18** surrounds the inner body **16** in both the outer radial direction and the axial direction, i.e., on the outer radial side and both axial sides of the inner body **16**. In another embodiment, the inner body **16** may be partially or completely exposed on the axial faces, such that the outer body **18** surrounds the inner body **16** radially but not axially. It is understood that if the hub **12** is part of the inner body **16**, then a portion of the inner body **16** including at least the hub **12** may be exposed.

In one embodiment, the outer body **18** includes at least two sections **22**, **24**, **26** that are radially disposed with respect to each other. These sections **22**, **24**, **26** may be referred to as a first section, a second section, a third section, etc. The outer body **18** in the embodiment of FIGS. **1-4** includes three sections: an inner section **22** that surrounds and contains the inner body **16**, a middle section **24** positioned immediately radially outward of the inner section **22**, and an outer section or outer rim **26** positioned immediately radially outward of the middle section **24** and forming the outer periphery of the weight plate **10**. In the embodiment of FIGS. **1-4**, the axial thickness of the weight plate **10** is greatest at the outer rim **26** and smallest at the middle section **24**. This is illustrated in FIG. **4**, where the thickness T**1** at the outer section **26** and the thickness T**4** at the inner section **22** are both greater than the thickness T**2** at the middle section **24**. The thickness T**1** of the outer section **26** and the thickness T**4** at the inner section **22** may be equal in one embodiment, or one of the inner section **22** or the outer section **26** may have a slightly greater thickness than the other. In the embodiments of FIGS. **1-8**, the thickness T**1** of the outer section **26** is greater than the thickness T**4** of the inner section **22**. The transitions **28** between the inner, middle, and outer sections **22**, **24**, **26** are beveled or gradual. Each of the sections **22**, **24**, **26** may have a constant axial thickness T**1**, T**2**, T**4** over the substantial entirety thereof (i.e., between the inner and outer periphery thereof), such as in the embodiment of FIGS. **1-4**. It is understood that the "constant axial thickness" is defined by the general contour of the outer surfaces **31**, **33** of the plate **10** or a section thereof. Accordingly, a section may be considered to have a "constant axial thickness" and still have slight variations, such as the thickness variations caused by the raised letters and numbers on the inner section **22** in FIGS. **1-4**. Additionally, a section may be considered to have a "constant axial thickness" despite the presence of numerous recesses **30** as disclosed herein, if the thickness defined by the outer surfaces **31**, **33** (i.e., the material surrounding the recesses **30**) is constant. In another embodiment, the outer body **18** may include only two sections, including an inner section **22** and an outer section **24**, **26** positioned radially outward of the inner section **22**, such that the inner section **22** has a constant axial thickness and the outer section **24**, **26** has a constant axial thickness that is larger or smaller than the axial thickness of the inner section **22**. In a further embodiment, the outer body **18** may include more than the three sections **22**, **24**, **26** illustrated in FIGS. **1-4**, such that the outer body **18** has more than one middle section.

The outer body **18** may be formed of a single material and/or a single piece in one embodiment. In the embodiment of FIGS. **1-4**, the outer body **18** is molded around the inner body **16** and formed of a rubber material. The material of the outer body **18** may be relatively soft, to provide sound and vibration damping and impact absorbing properties, such as having a hardness of 50-80 Shore A. In another embodiment, the material of the outer body **18** may be a rubber material having a hardness of 70-90 Shore A, which provides sound and vibration damping and impact absorbing properties. An ethylene propylene diene monomer (EPDM) rubber may be used as the rubber material of the outer body **18** in one embodiment.

The middle section **24** of the outer body **18** in FIGS. **1-4** includes a plurality of recesses **30** extending inward from opposed front and rear surfaces **31**, **33**. The recesses **30** in this embodiment are generally equal in depth but have different sizes and shapes. The recesses **30** may have multiple different polygonal shapes having different numbers of sides in one embodiment. In one embodiment, the recesses **30** may include "groups" of recesses all having the same shapes and/or the same number of sides. For example, the recesses **30** may include at least first-shaped recesses **30**A having a first shape, size, volume, surface perimeter, and/or number of sides and second-shaped recesses **30**B having a second shape, size, volume, surface perimeter, and/or number of sides, and may further include third-shaped recesses **30**C having a third shape, size, volume, surface perimeter, and/or number of sides, or potentially additional recess groups. In the embodiment of FIGS. **1-4**, the recesses include small triangular recesses **30**A all having the same shape, size, volume, surface perimeter, and number of sides, mid-sized quadrilateral recesses **30**B all having the same shape, size, volume, surface perimeter, and number of sides,

and large pentagonal recesses **30**C all having the same shape, size, volume, surface perimeter, and number of sides, each with rounded corners. These recesses **30** may be considered first-shaped recesses **30**A, second-shaped recesses **30**B, and third-shaped recesses **30**C as described herein, and these groups are identified in FIGS. **2-3**. In other embodiments, other shapes of recesses **30** having different numbers of sides may be used, including single-sided recesses (e.g., circle, ellipse), two-sided recesses (e.g., pointed oval), and/or recesses having more than five sides. Each recess **30** in FIGS. **1-4** has a constant shape, e.g., the same peripheral size and shape, along its entire axial length/depth, and this size and shape is the same as the surface shape and perimeter, i.e., the shape and perimeter defined at the surface **31**, **33** of the plate **10**.

As shown in FIGS. **2-3**, the recesses **30** on both the front and rear surfaces **31**, **33** have identical shapes and arrangements, such that each recess **30** on the front surface **31** is aligned with an identically sized and shaped recess **30** extending inward in the opposite direction from the rear surface **33**. As shown in FIGS. **1-4**, the recesses **30** are arranged such that each of the front and rear surfaces **31**, **33** has first-shaped (triangular) recesses **30**A, second-shaped (quadrilateral) recesses **30**B, and third-shaped (pentagonal) recesses **30**C distributed thereon in identical patterns. In this configuration, each first-shaped recess **30**A on the front surface **31** is axially aligned with a first-shaped recess **30**A on the rear surface **33**, each second-shaped recess **30**B on the front surface **31** is axially aligned with a second-shaped recess **30**B on the rear surface **33**, and each third-shaped recess **30**C on the front surface **31** is axially aligned with a third-shaped recess **30**C on the rear surface **33**. These opposed recesses **30** are separated by inner walls **32** as shown in FIG. **4**, and the inner walls **32** may all be of equal thickness T**3** in one embodiment. Each recess **30** in FIGS. **1-4** has a plurality of generally flat walls or sides **35** extending inwardly from the outer surface **31**, **33**, which are arranged to intersect at angles to each other. The intersections between the walls **35** are formed by rounded corners in FIGS. **1-4**. The recesses **30** may have a variety of different depths in other embodiments, such that the inner walls **32** have different axial thicknesses T**3**. Viewed another way, the middle section **24** may be considered to include a plurality of interconnected raised areas or ridges **34** extending between the outer rim **28** and the inner section **22**. In other embodiments, the arrangements of the recesses **30** may be different, and may not be identical or symmetrical. In a further embodiment, some or all of the recesses **30** may be formed as passages that extend completely through the middle section **24**, from the front surface **31** to the rear surface **33**. The configuration of the recesses **30** in the middle section **24** provides additional sound and vibration damping and impact absorbing properties.

The sizes, depths, spacing, shapes, and distribution of the recesses **30** are configured to produce a desired combination of sound and vibration reduction, bounce height, and durability when the weight plate **10** is dropped. Too great a bounce height may present safety issues, as the weight may bounce unpredictably and cause injury. In general, greater flexibility and compressibility of the material surrounding the recesses **30** (i.e., a greater proportional volume of the recesses **30** relative to the surrounding material) produces greater sound and vibration reduction, but a higher bounce height when the weight plate **10** is dropped to sustain a radial impact force, and may decrease durability. Conversely, less flexibility and compressibility of the material surrounding the recesses **30** (i.e., a smaller proportional volume of the recesses **30** relative to the surrounding material) produces less sound and vibration reduction, but a lower bounce height when the weight plate **10** is dropped to sustain a radial impact force, and may have increased durability. The desired combination of durability, bounce height, and sound/vibration reduction may be different depending on the desired use of the weight plate **10**. In one embodiment, the recesses **30** may be distributed across a section of the outer body **18** having a constant axial thickness, e.g., the middle section **24** in FIGS. **1-4**, and the total volume of the recesses **30** (between the front and rear surfaces **31**, **33**) is from 20-30%, or from 22-28%, or about 25%, of the volume of material in the middle section **24**. FIG. **9** illustrates the isolated middle section **24** of the outer body **18** in FIGS. **1-4**, which forms the basis for these figures. In another embodiment, the total volume of the recesses **30** (between the front and rear surfaces **31**, **33**) is from 6-13%, or from 8-11%, or about 9.5%, of the volume of material in the entire weight plate **10**. The volume ratios of the plates **10** in FIGS. **5-8** are the same as in FIGS. **1-4**. It is also shown, e.g., in FIGS. **1-4**, that immediately adjacent recesses on the front and rear sides **31**, **33** have flat sides **35** that are generally parallel with the closest adjacent side **35** of each adjacent recess **30**, in order to create consistent wall thickness of the material separating the adjacent recesses **30**. This, in turn, creates consistent and predictable compression of the material surrounding the recesses **30**.

The weight plate **10** in FIGS. **1-4** is configured as a 45 lb. weight, and the inner body **16** and the outer body **18** are dimensioned to provide this weight. FIGS. **5-6** illustrate another embodiment of a weight plate **10** configured as a 25 lb. weight, and FIGS. **7-8** illustrate a further embodiment of a weight plate **10** configured as a 35 lb. weight. The weight plates **10** in FIGS. **5-8** are configured similarly to the weight plate **10** in FIGS. **1-4**, and the features of the weight plates **10** in FIGS. **5-8** will therefore not be described in detail herein, for the sake of brevity. The mass of the inner body **16** as a proportion of the overall mass of the weight plate **10** may vary depending on the target weight of the weight plate **10**. In one embodiment, the weight plate **10** may be a 45 pound weight plate (see FIGS. **1-4**), and the ratio of the mass of the inner body **16** to the mass of the outer body **18** is from 0.77 to 1.43, or from 0.94 to 1.27, or about 1.10. In another embodiment, the weight plate **10** may be a 35 pound weight plate (see FIGS. **7-8**), and the ratio of the mass of the inner body **16** to the mass of the outer body **18** is from 0.84 to 1.56, or from 1.02 to 1.38, or about 1.20. In a further embodiment, the weight plate **10** may be a 25 pound weight plate (see FIGS. **5-6**), and the ratio of the mass of the inner body **16** to the mass of the outer body **18** is from 0.42 to 0.78, or from 0.51 to 0.69, or about 0.60.

The weight plates **10** in FIGS. **1-8** are designed as "bumper plates" that are designed to be dropped from an elevated position, such as when a weightlifting exercise is over. The weight plates **10** in FIGS. **1-8** have different weights with substantially equal outer widths (e.g., radius or diameter) and peripheral sizes (e.g., circumference), and the weight differences are achieved by increasing other dimensions of the inner and/or outer bodies **16**, **18**, such as the axial thickness. The weight plates **10** in FIGS. **1-8** all have diameters D of about 450 mm, and the radial width W of the outer rim **26** in these plates **10** is about 72 mm, as shown in FIG. **2**. The 45 lb. weight plate in FIGS. **1-4** has a maximum axial thickness T**1** (at the outer rim) of about 82 mm and a thickness T**2** in the areas surrounding the recesses **30** of about 70 mm, the 35 lb. weight plate in FIGS. **7-8** has a maximum axial thickness of about 68 mm and a thickness in

the areas surrounding the recesses **30** of about 56 mm, and the 25 lb. weight plate in FIGS. **5-6** has a maximum axial thickness of about 59 mm and a thickness in the areas surrounding the recesses **30** of about 47 mm. The thicknesses T**3** of the inner walls **32** in the weight plates **10** in FIGS. **1-8** are all approximately equal at about 6 mm, and the depths of the recesses **30** vary among the different weight plates **10**. The weight plates **10** in FIGS. **5-6** have recesses **30** with depths of about 20.5 mm, the weight plates **10** in FIGS. **7-8** have recesses **30** with depths of about 25 mm, and the weight plates **10** in FIGS. **1-4** have recesses **30** with depths of about 32 mm. In one embodiment, the depth of each recess **30** in a weight plate **10** of any size is about 43%-46% of the axial thickness of the area surrounding the recess **30**. In another embodiment, the configurations and features described herein may be used in connection with weight plates that have unequal diameters and/or different (e.g., non-circular) peripheral shapes. In a further embodiment, the configurations and features described herein may be used in connection with fixed (non-removable) weights or weight plates, such as weights fixedly attached to the ends of a dumbbell.

Various embodiments of weight plates have been described herein, which include various components and features. In other embodiments, the weight plates may be provided with any combination of such components and features. It is also understood that in other embodiments, the various devices, components, and features of the weight plates described herein may be constructed with similar structural and functional elements having different configurations, including different ornamental appearances.

Several alternative embodiments and examples have been described and illustrated herein. A person of ordinary skill in the art would appreciate the features of the individual embodiments, and the possible combinations and variations of the components. A person of ordinary skill in the art would further appreciate that any of the embodiments could be provided in any combination with the other embodiments disclosed herein. It is understood that the invention may be embodied in other specific forms without departing from the spirit or central characteristics thereof. The present examples and embodiments, therefore, are to be considered in all respects as illustrative and not restrictive, and the invention is not to be limited to the details given herein. Terms such as "top," "bottom," "front," "back," "side," "rear," and the like, as used herein, are intended for illustrative purposes only and do not limit the embodiments in any way. When used in description of a method or process, the term "providing" (or variations thereof) as used herein means generally making an article available for further actions, and does not imply that the entity "providing" the article manufactured, assembled, or otherwise produced the article. Nothing in this specification should be construed as requiring a specific three dimensional orientation of structures in order to fall within the scope of this invention, unless explicitly specified by the claims. Additionally, the term "plurality," as used herein, indicates any number greater than one, either disjunctively or conjunctively, as necessary, up to an infinite number. Accordingly, while the specific embodiments have been illustrated and described, numerous modifications come to mind without significantly departing from the spirit of the invention and the scope of protection is only limited by the scope of the accompanying claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A weight plate comprising:

an inner section having an annular shape with a passage extending axially through the inner section and configured to receive an elongated member therethrough, the inner section having a first axial thickness;

a middle section having an annular shape with a circular inner periphery and a circular outer periphery and positioned radially outward of the inner section, wherein the middle section includes first and second outer surfaces on opposite axial sides of the weight plate, with a second axial thickness defined between the first outer surface and the second outer surface;

an outer section having an annular shape and positioned radially outward of the middle section and forming an outer radial periphery of the weight plate, wherein the outer section has a third axial thickness, wherein the first axial thickness and the third axial thickness are greater than the second axial thickness; and

a plurality of recesses located in the middle section and extending axially inward from at least one of the first outer surface and the second outer surface through at least a portion of the second axial thickness, wherein the plurality of recesses comprise a plurality of first-shaped recesses having a first peripheral shape with a first number of sides and a plurality of second-shaped recesses having a second peripheral shape that is different than the first peripheral shape and with a second number of sides that is different from the first number of sides,

wherein the first-shaped recesses and the second-shaped recesses are annularly interspersed with one another, and

wherein the plurality of recesses further comprises a plurality of third-shaped recesses having a third peripheral shape that is different from the first peripheral shape and the second peripheral shape and a third number of sides.

2. The weight plate of claim **1**, further comprising an outer body formed of a first material and including the inner section, the middle section, and the outer section, and an inner body formed of a second material having a larger density and lower flexibility than the first material, wherein the inner body is contained within the inner section of the outer body, wherein the outer body surrounds the inner body on at least both axial sides and an outer radial side thereof.

3. The weight plate of claim **2**, wherein the plurality of recesses further comprises a plurality of fourth-shaped recesses having a fourth peripheral shape that is different from the third peripheral shape and a fourth number of sides, and wherein the third-shaped recesses and the fourth-shaped recesses are annularly interspersed with one another.

4. The weight plate of claim **2**, wherein the third number of sides is different from the first number of sides and the second number of sides.

5. The weight plate of claim **2**, wherein the first-shaped recesses each have a first volume, and the second-shaped recesses each have a second volume that is different from the first volume, and wherein the third-shaped recesses each have a third volume that is different from the first volume and the second volume.

6. The weight plate of claim **1**, wherein the first-shaped recesses each have a first perimeter defined at the first outer surface or the second outer surface and a first volume, and the second-shaped recesses each have a second perimeter defined at the first outer surface or the second outer surface that is different from the first perimeter and a second volume that is different from the first volume.

7. The weight plate of claim **1**, wherein the first-shaped recesses and the second-shaped recesses are arranged in an alternating annular configuration.

8. A weight plate comprising:

an inner section having an annular shape with a passage extending axially through the inner section and configured to receive an elongated member therethrough, the inner section having a first axial thickness;

a middle section having an annular shape with a circular inner periphery and a circular outer periphery and positioned radially outward of the inner section, wherein the middle section includes first and second outer surfaces on opposite axial sides of the weight plate, with a second axial thickness defined between the first outer surface and the second outer surface;

an outer section having an annular shape and positioned radially outward of the middle section and forming an outer radial periphery of the weight plate, wherein the outer section has a third axial thickness, wherein the first axial thickness and the third axial thickness are greater than the second axial thickness; and

a plurality of recesses located in the middle section and extending axially inward from at least one of the first outer surface and the second outer surface through at least a portion of the second axial thickness, wherein the plurality of recesses comprise a plurality of first-shaped recesses each having a first perimeter and a first volume, and a plurality of second-shaped recesses each having a second perimeter and a second volume that are different from the first perimeter and the first volume,

wherein the first-shaped recesses and the second-shaped recesses are annularly interspersed with one another, and

wherein the plurality of recesses further comprises a plurality of third-shaped recesses each having a third perimeter that is different from the first perimeter and the second perimeter and a third volume that is different from the first volume and the second volume.

9. The weight plate of claim 8, further comprising an outer body formed of a first material and including the inner section, the middle section, and the outer section, and an inner body formed of a second material having a larger density and lower flexibility than the first material, wherein the inner body is contained within the inner section of the outer body, wherein the outer body surrounds the inner body on at least both axial sides and an outer radial side thereof.

10. The weight plate of claim 8, wherein the first-shaped recesses have a first number of sides, the second-shaped recesses have a second number of sides that is different from the first number of sides, and the third-shaped recesses have a third number of sides that is different from the first number of sides and the second number of sides.

11. The weight plate of claim 10, wherein the plurality of recesses further comprises a plurality of fourth-shaped recesses each having a fourth perimeter that is different from the third perimeter and a fourth volume that is different from the third volume, wherein the third-shaped recesses and the fourth-shaped recesses are annularly interspersed with one another.

12. The weight plate of claim 11, wherein the fourth perimeter is also different from the first perimeter and the second perimeter, and the fourth volume is also different from the first volume and the second volume.

13. The weight plate of claim 8, wherein the first-shaped recesses and the second-shaped recesses are arranged in an alternating annular configuration.

14. A weight plate comprising:

an inner section having an annular shape with a passage extending axially through the inner section and configured to receive an elongated member therethrough, the inner section having a first axial thickness;

a middle section having an annular shape with a circular inner periphery and a circular outer periphery and positioned radially outward of the inner section, wherein the middle section includes first and second outer surfaces on opposite axial sides of the weight plate, with a second axial thickness defined between the first outer surface and the second outer surface;

an outer section having an annular shape and positioned radially outward of the middle section and forming an outer radial periphery of the weight plate, wherein the outer section has a third axial thickness, wherein the first axial thickness and the third axial thickness are greater than the second axial thickness; and

a plurality of recesses located in the middle section and extending axially inward from the first outer surface and the second outer surface through a portion of the second axial thickness, wherein the plurality of recesses comprise a plurality of first-shaped recesses having a first peripheral shape and a plurality of second-shaped recesses having a second peripheral shape that is different than the first peripheral shape, and wherein each of the first-shaped recesses on the first outer surface is axially aligned with another of the first-shaped recesses on the second outer surface to form a pair of first-shaped recesses separated by a first inner wall, and each of the second-shaped recesses on the first outer surface is axially aligned with another of the second-shaped recesses on the second outer surface to form a pair of second-shaped recesses separated by a second inner wall,

wherein the plurality of first-shaped recesses and the plurality of second-shaped recesses all have equal depths from the first outer surface and the second outer surface.

15. The weight plate of claim 14, further comprising an outer body formed of a first material and including the inner section, the middle section, and the outer section, and an inner body formed of a second material having a larger density and lower flexibility than the first material, wherein the inner body is contained within the inner section of the outer body, wherein the outer body surrounds the inner body on at least both axial sides and an outer radial side thereof.

16. The weight plate of claim 14, wherein the plurality of recesses further comprises a plurality of third-shaped recesses having a third peripheral shape that is different from the first peripheral shape and the second peripheral shape, wherein each of the third-shaped recesses on the first outer surface is axially aligned with another of the third-shaped recesses on the second outer surface to form a pair of third-shaped recesses separated by a third inner wall, and wherein the plurality of third-shaped recesses have depths from the first outer surface and the second outer surface equal to the depths of the plurality of first-shaped recesses and the plurality of second-shaped recesses.

17. The weight plate of claim 16, wherein the plurality of recesses further comprises a plurality of fourth-shaped recesses having a fourth peripheral shape that is different from the third peripheral shape, wherein each of the fourth-shaped recesses on the first outer surface is axially aligned with another of the fourth-shaped recesses on the second outer surface to form a pair of fourth-shaped recesses separated by a fourth inner wall, and wherein the plurality of fourth-shaped recesses have depths from the first outer surface and the second outer surface equal to the depths of

the plurality of first-shaped recesses, the plurality of second-shaped recesses, and the plurality of third-shaped recesses.

18. The weight plate of claim **17**, wherein the third peripheral shape differs from the fourth peripheral shape in at least one of a number of sides, a perimeter, and a volume.

19. The weight plate of claim **14**, wherein the first peripheral shape differs from the second peripheral shape in at least one of a number of sides, a perimeter, and a volume.

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